

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EUR-12 ARA-06 EB-07 DHA-02

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OMB-01 TRSE-00 /102 W

-----172211Z 038298 /72

R 171107Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9332

INFO/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 9332

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1190

MAPUTO FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GB, US

SUBJ: YOUNG MEETING WITH BONGO

SUMMARY: IN HOUR-LONG MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG MAY 16, GABONESE PRESIDENT BONGO REAFFIRMED HIS TOTAL SUPPORT FOR USG POLICY INITIATIVES TOWARD SOUTHERN AFRICA AND SHARPLY CRITICIZED SOVIETS FOR FOMENTING DIVISION AMONG AFRICAN STATES. END SUMMARY.

1. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TRANSIT/FUEL STOP IN LIBREVILLE, AMBASSADOR YOUNG HAD HOUR-LONG MEETING MAY 16 WITH PRESIDENT BONGO AND THEN JOINED PRESIDENT IN JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE FOR AMERICAN AND GABONESE JOURNALISTS. YOUNG WAS ACCOMPANIED IN CALL ON PRESIDENT BY UNDERSECRETARY MOOSE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY MAYNES, USUN ADVISER PETREE, AND AMBASSADOR; GABONESE SIDE AT MEETING INCLUDED SECSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS REKANGALT AND PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER NGOMO-OBIANG.

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2. IN RESPONSE TO BONGO'S QUESTION, YOUNG OPENED SUBSTANTIVE EXCHANGE WITH SUMMARY OF KEY ELEMENTS IN USG POLICY VIS-A-VIS SOUTHERN AFRICA AS UPDATE TO BONGO'S MEETINGS IN MARCH WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, SECRETARY VANCE, AND YOUNG HIMSELF. (YOUNG PRESENTATION INCLUDED BRIEFING ON FORTHCOMING MONDLALE-VORSTER

MEETING ALONG LINES PREVIOUS INSTRUCTION WHICH NOT PRESENTED TO BONGO EARLIER BECAUSE OF LATTER'S ABSENCE ON TRIP TO FAR EAST.)

3. RESPONDING TO YOUNG'S OUTLINE OF USG INITIATIVES, BONGO BEGAN WITH EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION FOR RECEPTION ACCORDED HIM DURING US VISIT AND FOR YOUNG'S SUBSEQUENT EFFORTS IN ASSURING OUTCOME SATISFACTORY TO GABON FROM UNSC DEBATE ON BENIN COMPLAINT. TURNING TO BROADER QUESTIONS OF AFRICAN POLICY, BONGO APPLAUDED YOUNG'S CURRENT TRIP AS ELEMENT IN NEW USG POLICY WHICH, HE SAID, IS "MOVING IN DIRECTION DESIRED BY AFRICANS." INITIATIVES OUTLINED TO HIM BY PRESIDENT CARTER IN MARCH, AND PURSUED VIGOROUSLY SINCE THAT TIME, ARE WIDELY UNDERSTOOD IN AFRICA, AND ARE EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN KEEPING OAU ON RIGHT TRACK. US EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THIS REGARD, PRESIDENT SAID, SINCE THIS IS KEY TO SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

4. IN CONTRAST, PRESIDENT CONTINUED, SOVIET POLICY IS "BLACK SPOT" ON AFRICAN SCENE. WHERE US, WHETHER IN MIDDLE EAST OR IN AFRICA, SEEKS TO RECONCILE CONTENDING PARTIES, SOVIETS SEEK ONLY TO DIVIDE AND CONQUER. THEIR OBJECTIVE IS TO TOPPLE DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED CHIEFS OF STATE THROUGH DISSIDENCE AND SUBVERSION, TO ALIGN AFRICA WITH THEMSELVES, AND TO EXERCISE CONTROL EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH CUBAN SATELLITES. HOWEVER, SOVIETS DO NOT UNDERSTAND AFRICAN ATTACHMENT TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, SO THEIR APPROACH

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TO AFRICA HAS BUILT-IN WEAKNESS WHICH MAKES IT EASIER FOR US AND WEST TO COMBAT IF LATTER ARE PREPARED TO STAND FIRM.

5. REFERRING TO SITUATION IN ZAIRE, BONGO SAID GABON UNDERSTANDS US POLICY OUTLINED BY YOUNG OF LEAVING TO AFRICANS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPPORTING MOBUTU. HOWEVER, HE SAID, KEY PROBLEM IN ZAIRE AS ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA IS INTERNAL. HE AND KING HASSAN HAD BOTH TOLD MOBUTU THAT HE SHOULD DEAL WITH HIS ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS AND MAKE SURE HIS PEOPLE HAVE FOOD AND WORK IF HE IS TO COMMAND THEIR SUPPORT AND KEEP THEM FROM BEING LED INTO DISSIDENCE AND SUBVERSION. YET FOR ALL HIS FAULTS, BONGO ADDED, MOBUTU IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT BECAUSE THERE IS NO ONE TO REPLACE HIM IF HE DISAPPEARS.

6. IN RESPONSE TO STATEMENT BY ASST. SEC. MAYNES OF USG DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN UN AND AFFILIATED ORGANIZA-

TIONS (MAYNES SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED ILO CASE), BONGO WARMLY CONCURRED IN US OBJECTIVE OF FOCUSING INTERNATIONAL FORA ON DEVELOPMENT ISSUES RATHER THAN STERILE POLITICAL ARGUMENTS. BONGO PRAISED PRESIDENT CARTER'S FRANKNESS IN IDENTIFYING KEY QUESTIONS TO BE TACKLED, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT US EFFORTS AIMED AT BRINGING UN RESOURCES TO BEAR ON REAL PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING WORLD WOULD BEAR FRUIT.

7. ASKED BY MAYNES WHAT ADVICE HE WOULD OFFER FOR FORTHCOMING MAPUTO CONFERENCE, BONGO REPLIED THAT KEY TO SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS IS INSTITUTION OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED -- BLACK MAJORITIES AND WHITE MINORITIES IN ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA, AND SOUTH AFRICA. ONLY ALTERNATIVE, ARMED STRUGGLE, SIMPLY OPENS AREA TO SOVIETS WHO ALONE FAVOR RECOURSE TO WAR AND WOULD LEAD TO SECOND ANGOLA WITH ALL ITS TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES IN TERMS OF SUFFERING AND ECONOMIC COLLAPSE.

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8. IN THIS CONTEXT, PRESIDENT SAID, HE HOPES US AND OTHER WESTERN ALLIES WILL PRESS VORSTER AND SMITH TO MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND THAT THEY MUST YIELD POWER TO BLACK MAJORITIES IN THEIR COUNTRIES. AT SAME TIME, FRONT LINE STATES MUST BE URGED TO LET PEOPLE OF COUNTRIES CONCERNED CHOOSE THEIR OWN LEADERS AND NOT TO ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE PATRIOTIC FRONT IN ZIMBABWE. IF THEY INSIST ON THIS COURSE, WHITE MINORITY WILL HARDEN ITS POSITION AND LEAVE NO ALTERNATIVE TO FURTHER ARMED CONFLICT, WITH INEVITABLE END RESULT THAT WHITES WILL BE FORCED OUT AND COUNTRY SUFFER FROM WANT OF THEIR SKILLS. DIALOGUE MUST LEAD TO BLACK RULE, BUT ALSO TO ASSURING PLACE FOR WHITE MINORITY WHO ALONE CAN FURNISH CADRES AND TECHNOLOGY ESSENTIAL TO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

9. IN SUBSEQUENT JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE, BONGO RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS FROM US PRESS ABOUT SEEMING CONFLICT IN HIS VIEWS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND IN UGANDA (FOLLOWING UP MARCH INTERVIEW IN NEWSWEEK) AND ON SOVIET POLICY IN AFRICA, BUT DECLINED TO DISCUSS CONTENT OF HIS EXCHANGE WITH YOUNG. TO FIRST QUERY, BONGO DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN OAU MEMBER STATE UGANDA (WHICH HE WAS ENJOINED BY OAU CHARTER FROM CRITICIZING) AND SOUTH AFRICA WHICH, IN HIS WORDS, IS NOT "AFRICAN STATE." IN COURSE OF RESPONSE, BONGO EXPOUNDED HIS VIEW THAT DIALOGUE BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA IS KEY TO PEACEFUL SOLUTION AND AFFIRMED FULL SUPPORT FOR USG POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA. TO QUESTION ON SOVIET ROLE, BONGO SAID THAT PROBLEM OF COPING WITH SOVIETS IS ESSENTIALLY

ONE FOR AFRICANS TO SOLVE, NOT USG. AFRICANS THEMSELVES
HAD WALKED INTO ARMS OF SOVIETS, AND IT WAS NOW UP TO
AFRICANS TO DEAL WITH RESULTING SITUATION. STEIGMAN

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Message Attributes

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SAS ID: 2489674
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
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TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, GB, US, (YOUNG, ANDREW), (BONGO, EL HADJ OMAR)
To: STATE KINSHASA
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6d833d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009